

STATE OF MARYLAND

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Office of the State Prosecutor has obtained criminal charges against **Ashita Avinash Patel**, age 45, of Columbia, Maryland, and **Stephen James Weissenberger**, age 55, of Towson, Maryland, both stemming from the ongoing investigation into corruption in the Baltimore City Public Schools.

The Grand Jury of Baltimore City indicted Mr. Weissenberger, a service manager with Johnson Controls, Inc. (formerly York International Corporation), on one count of Bribery. The indictment alleges that Mr. Weissenberger provided gifts and favors to Rajiv Dixit, the former facilities manager at the Baltimore City Public Schools, with the intent to influence Mr. Dixit in the performance of his duties. Specifically, the indictment alleges that Mr. Weissenberger provided an air conditioning unit to Mr. Dixit, at no charge, for his Reisterstown home that was being built in 2002. If convicted of Bribery, Mr. Weissenberger faces a maximum penalty of 12 years incarceration, and/or a fine of up to \$5,000.

Ms. Patel, a former co-owner of an Exxon gas station with Rajiv Dixit, has been indicted by the same Grand Jury on one count of theft, one count of conspiracy to commit theft, and one count of bribery. The three count indictment alleges that Ms. Patel conspired with Mr. Dixit and others to steal approximately \$32,000 from the Baltimore City Public Schools by billing the school system using an entity known as Kesa Maintenance, Inc. If convicted, Ms. Patel faces a maximum of 15 years incarceration and/or \$25,000 in fines for both Theft and Conspiracy to Commit Theft, and a maximum of 12 years incarceration and/or a fine of up to \$5,000 for the Bribery charge.

Although Mr. Weissenberger and Ms. Patel have been charged, both are presumed innocent unless and until they are convicted. No court dates have been set for either defendant.

Mr. Weissenberger and Ms. Patel are the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> persons to face criminal charges stemming out of this office's investigation into corruption in the Baltimore City Public Schools. In the previous 2 years, the following people have been charged and convicted: Melvin Duklewski, James Duklewski, Gilbert Sapperstein, Rajiv Dixit, Arthur Lester Holtz, Ida Marie Beran, Cecil Thrower, Gonzalo Garcia, William West, and David Clemmons. To date, the total money recovered by the State in restitution, fines and charitable donations exceeds \$5,500,000.

The investigation continues.

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**STATE OF MARYLAND**

**VS**

**ASHITA AVINASH PATEL  
10894 Harmel Drive  
Columbia, Maryland 21044  
6/10/61 Date of Birth**

**INDICTMENT**

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**(True Bill)**

\_\_\_\_\_, **Foreman**  
File:

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**Witnesses:**

Special Agent Rick Barger  
Office of the State Prosecutor  
300 East Joppa Road, Suite 410  
Towson, Maryland 21286

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**CHARGES:**

***THEFT (+)***  
***CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT THEFT (+)***  
***BRIBERY***

STATE OF MARYLAND,  
City of Baltimore, to wit:

**COUNT I**

The Grand Jurors of the State of Maryland for the body of Baltimore City do on their oath present that:

**ASHITA PATEL**

at Baltimore City, aforesaid, from on or about May 8, 2002, the exact date to the Grand Jury being unknown, and continuing through on or about April 7, 2003, the exact date to the Grand Jury being unknown, willfully, knowingly and unlawfully did steal by deception property belonging to the New Board of School Commissioners, also known as the Baltimore City Public Schools, the value of which exceeded \$500.00, to wit: approximately \$32,000 United States Currency (money), by using a an entity known as Kesa Maintenance, Inc., with the intent to deprive Baltimore City Public Schools of the property, contrary to the form of the Act of Assembly in such case made and provided against the peace, government and dignity of the State.

(Theft over \$500.00, *Criminal Law Article*, §§ 7-104; 7-103(f))

**COUNT II**

And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their Oath aforesaid, do further present that the said:

**ASHITA PATEL**

at Baltimore City, aforesaid, from on or about May 8, 2002, the exact date to the Grand Jury being unknown, and continuing through on or about June 3, 2003, the exact date to the Grand Jury being unknown, willfully, knowingly and unlawfully did conspire with Rajiv Dixit and with others known and unknown to the Grand Jury to commit theft by deception with the intent to defraud the New Board of School Commissioners, also known as the Baltimore City Public Schools, by fraudulently billing the Baltimore City Public Schools in excess of \$500, to wit: approximately \$32,000, contrary to the Common Law, and against the peace, government and dignity of the State.

(Conspiracy to Commit Theft over \$500.00, *Common Law*, {*Criminal Law Article* §7-104(b)})

### **COUNT III**

And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their Oath aforesaid, do further present that the said:

#### **ASHITA PATEL**

at Baltimore City, aforesaid, from on or about May 8, 2002, the exact date to the Grand Jury being unknown, and continuing through on or about June 3, 2003, did bribe Rajiv Dixit, who was then and there a public employee and employed by the Baltimore City Public Schools and served in the capacity of a supervisor in the facilities department of the Baltimore City Public Schools, with the intent to influence the said Rajiv Dixit in the performance of his official duties, contrary to the form of the Act of Assembly in such case made and provided and against the peace, government and dignity of the State. (Bribery, *Criminal Law Article*, § 9-201)

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Robert A. Rohrbaugh  
Maryland State Prosecutor



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**STATE OF MARYLAND**

**VS**

**STEPHEN JAMES WEISSENBERGER**  
**1416 Dogwood Hill**  
**Towson, Maryland 21286**  
**1/8/52 Date of Birth**

**INDICTMENT**

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**(True Bill)**

\_\_\_\_\_, **Foreman**  
**File:**

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**Witnesses:**

Special Agent Rick Barger  
Office of the State Prosecutor  
300 East Joppa Road, Suite 410  
Towson, Maryland 21286

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**CHARGES:**

***BRIBERY***

STATE OF MARYLAND,  
City of Baltimore, to wit:

**COUNT I**

The Grand Jurors of the State of Maryland for the body of Baltimore City do on their oath present that:

**STEPHEN JAMES WEISSENBERGER**

at Baltimore City, aforesaid, from on or about January 29, 1999, the exact date to the Grand Jury being unknown, to on or about December 23, 2002, the exact date to the Grand Jury being unknown, did bribe Rajiv Dixit, who was then and there a public employee and employed by the Baltimore City Public Schools and served in the capacity of a supervisor in the facilities department of the Baltimore City Public Schools, by offering to and in fact providing Rajiv Dixit with an air conditioning unit for Rajiv Dixit's home, at no charge to Rajiv Dixit, as well as providing other gifts and favors to Rajiv Dixit, with the intent to influence the said Rajiv Dixit in the performance of his official duties, contrary to the form of the Act of Assembly in such case made and provided and against the peace, government and dignity of the State.  
(Bribery, *Criminal Law Article*, § 9-201)

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Robert A. Rohrbaugh  
Maryland State Prosecutor